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NOTE

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Subject: Summary record of the meeting of the Sub-committee on **Security and Defence (SEDE) of the European Parliament**, Brussels, 28 November 2012

The meeting was chaired by Mr Danjean (EPP, FR) and Vice-Chair Ms Nicolai (ALDE, RO).

I. Security situation in the Sahel region and EUCAP SAHEL Niger - Exchange of views with:

- **Gilles de Kerchove, EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator**
- **Manuel Lopez Blanco, Director, Western and Central Africa (EEAS)**
- **Hansjörg Haber, Civilian Operations Commander and Director of CPCC**

In his introductory statement, the Chair welcomed the involvement of the EU in the Sahel region but criticised the Council for the time it took to adopt its decisions.

Mr Manuel Lopez Blanco provided an overview of the EU strategy and stressed the positive results of the support for the Mali military forces in re-establishing territorial integrity. He put particular emphasis on the situation in the North and reported that ongoing conflicts between the different groups were spilling over into neighbouring countries. Mr Manuel Lopez Blanco recalled that the EU aimed to restore credibility with a road map for peace talks and reconciliation, which would be connected to the EU assistance programme.

To this end, the EU was mobilising all available instruments.

Mr Haber reported that the EUCAP SAHEL Niger mission was still at an early stage of development and recalled the different objectives of the mission. He reported on a number of issues concerning the establishment of the mission (headquarters, procurement procedures, the staff recruitment bottleneck) and promised more substantive information at a later stage.

Mr de Kerchove then provided a detailed analysis of the situation in the Sahel region, stressing in particular the increasing attractiveness of terrorist groups (also in refugee camps) and the general issue of drug trafficking. He welcomed the EU's strong response and called for an extensive EU strategy. In this context, he took the view that alongside military action, there should be preventive measures (e.g. counter-narrative action), immediate civil response, reconciliation and explanation of the military action. Mr de Kerchove doubted whether Mali's judiciary would be able to deal with all the terrorists once they were arrested.

The Chair then took the floor and reiterated his criticism of the Council, stating that a lot of time had been lost and that it was possibly already too late as the EU's response seemed to have been overtaken by developments on the ground. He also criticised that the same issues arose whenever an EU mission was deployed. His comments were shared by a large majority of MEPs taking the floor and Ms Koppa (S&D, EL) called the EU's comprehensive approach for the Sahel a complete disaster and warned that the situation could become a global security issue. MEPs put a number of questions to the guests. In reply, Mr Lopez Blanco made it clear that any EU strategy could only aim to assist rather than replace the public authorities receiving EU aid (issue of ownership). He added that the nature of the EU meant that it could not do everything at once. With regard to the question on the expected cooperation between the EU and the UN Special Envoy, Prodi, (question put by the Chair), he replied that the EU had already indicated that it was willing to support Mr Prodi, yet he felt that the latter would probably need more time to become fully operational. He also recalled that the re-establishment of the Mali republican credible army and of its chain of command was at the heart of the issue. Mr Haber replied to the mainly horizontal questions on EU missions raised by all Members taking the floor that funding was not the issue for the deployment of these missions; the issue was to disburse the available funds. Another issue highlighted was staff recruitment (availability, limited applications, secondment instead of direct contracting).

Yet, in his opinion, a lack of preparatory measures was the main reason for the deployment difficulties. He announced that the Commission intended to take such measures in the future. Concerning the OpCen (Ms Koppa), he replied that it supported him though he could make better use of the staff. Mr de Kerchove shared the comments of the Chair on the delayed establishment of EU missions as well as Mr Lopez Blanco's comments on ownership. On the issue of proliferation of nuclear weapons (Ms Koppa), he answered that the EEAS was in the process of establishing a centre of excellence which would provide assistance to countries. Concerning the current budget negotiations (Mr Kelam (EPP, EE)), he feared that the outcome could be insufficient funds for counter-terrorism. In this context, he took the view that development aid funds could also, in some cases, be used for security and defence purposes.

II. Negotiations on an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT): state of play - Exchange of views with:
- Fabio Della Piazza, Chair of COARM
- Cédric Poitevin, Research officer at GRIP (Unit "Arms transfers and light weapons")

Mr Della Piazza reported the outcome of the ATT conference, explaining that despite the fact that the parties had failed to agree on a treaty, the EU had almost achieved its objectives. In this respect he referred to the First Committee UN resolution adopted, which ensured the continuation of the negotiation process in 2013 using the treaty text from last July's conference. As regards the reasons for the failure, he stressed the particular role of the US and some other states which had refrained from actively participating in the negotiation process, which was very much controlled by the Chair. He recognised that there was a risk of further watering down the treaty in order to take on board other states. Mr Della Piazza also pointed out that the EU stance on domestic transfers (as a result of existing EU legislation) faced strong resistance at the conference. Mr Poitevin made some additional critical comments on the draft text, in particular the missing definitions and some vague wording, its limited scope (ammunition excluded) as well as the exclusions of some types of arms. He concluded that the draft text did not correspond to European Standards and called on the EU to focus on clarifying the text.

The contributions of the Members taking the floor mainly consisted of questions. In reply, Mr Della Piazza explained that both existing EU legislation and the current draft text allowed states to adopt more stringent measures (question put by Ms Nicolai).

Concerning controls (Mr Zemke (S&D, PL)), he explained that the current draft text provided for different control steps which could lead to an export denial, though he admitted that the text, and particularly the parameters, were not perfect. He reported that no sanctions were foreseen and he took the view that reporting should be mandatory for the parties, which would allow export authorisations to be discussed among the treaty parties. Regarding the EU's steering role, he explained that the Member States were negotiators and the EU only an observer. In this context, he pointed out that the Council had still to decide how it would handle the next round of negotiations. Referring to the different negotiation stances of third countries, he reported that Israel (Mr Zemke) was not a leading actor, Ukraine (Mr Zemke) adopted a position close to that of China and was often close to the EU's position, Belarus (Mr Paleckis (S&D, LT)) closely followed the Russian line (Vice-Chair), meaning no clear position in favour of or against the ATT and aiming to reach an agreement which could be realistically implemented.

III. Workshop on the Security Sector Reform (SSR)

During the workshop, the presentation covered the effects of the Arab awakening on the EU support for SSR in the Horn of Africa, the importance of monitoring and evaluation in the SSR, challenges and constraints for the SSR on the Horn of Africa as well as the inclusion of the SSR in the EU's comprehensive approach.

The Vice-Chair decided that due to the limited presence of MEPs, there would be no question and answer session.

IV. Date and venue of the next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 6 December (a.m. in Brussels).